

# RSDP The Student Foodie newsletter - Spring 2015

## U Students organizing around food and food issues

By Ronnie Schwenn



[USLGF](#) and [Students for Sustainability](#) held an event called Food Revolution outside Rapson Hall last fall. Evelina Knodel serves chili to guests at the event, which highlighted six distinct stages of the food cycle, as another student explains the Real Food Challenge. (Photo: Ronnie Schwenn)

University of Minnesota student groups are increasingly interested in making healthy food more accessible on the Twin Cities campus. The group [U Students Like Good Food \(USLGF\)](#) is hoping to bring more choices to students living on campus by applying criteria from the Real Food Challenge, an effort to shift \$1 billion of existing U.S. university food budgets away from "industrial farms and junk food" towards "community-based, fair, ecologically sound and humane food by 2020", to U of M dining halls.

Student Evelina Knodel said, "It was important to me as a freshman who was forced to eat in dining halls to get involved with the food discussion on campus." Now, as president of USLGF, she's helping analyze what kind of food is being served in the dining halls and how it could be made more local and sustainable. After looking at 17th Avenue dining hall's invoices for the month of September, the group found that only 7 percent of the food served met the Real Food Challenge criteria. Knodel is still hopeful, though; two years ago, Aramark, the company that provides University Dining Services food, would not engage USLGF members. Last year, members were able to have meetings with representatives from the company, and they have continued to do research related to the Real Food Challenge.



At Food Revolution, a USLGF student discusses the Real Food Challenge with visiting food professionals. (Photo: Ronnie Schwenn)

The changes in attitudes toward food that can be seen at the University of Minnesota are also indicative of changes happening across the country. James Norton, editor and publisher of the online food publication *The Heavy Table* told Minnesota Public Radio last fall that "Food is becoming more than just units [people] are putting in their body to keep themselves moving. It says something about who you are, what you're interested in...and as a culture, particularly on the younger side of things, people are more comfortable unpacking that and talking about that."

## Seward Co-op offers tips on eating sustainably on a budget

By Ronnie Schwenn



The Seward Co-op at 2823 East Franklin Avenue in Minneapolis. (Photo: Seward Co-op)

Eating healthy, sustainable food and maintaining a realistic budget can often be seen as opposing goals, but groups both on and off campus at the U of M are working to change that perception. Just a short walk from the U's Minneapolis campus is the [Seward Co-op](#), where education and outreach coordinator LaDonna Sanders-Redmond oversees programs that make sure all members of the community, including students, have access to affordable, healthy food.

One such program is called Nourish. Community members who are enrolled in Minnesota Food Assistance, WIC, and other similar programs are eligible to receive need-based discounts on their purchases. Even if one

is not eligible for the need-based discounts that Nourish offers, there are still many ways to be involved with it. All throughout the store, Sanders-Redmond says, are tags that identify food items as Nourish 'staples'. The 200-plus food items that have been tagged as staples are items that have been identified as affordable, long-lasting, and easily incorporated into recipes. There are also free classes offered at the Seward Co-op where participants can learn how to prepare meals using these staples. See the [Nourish website](#).

---

## Sustainable food gaining ground across the U

By Ronnie Schwenn



With assistance from RSDP's Mary J. Page Community-University Partnership Fund, Amanda Sames, a PhD student at the University's College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Sciences, is conducting a community research project on developing markets for Minnesota-grown hazelnuts, a cover crop that can help soil erosion on farms.

There are signs that the University is listening to what students and many consumers are saying about food. The University's recent decision to hire Scott Pampuch as its executive chef is a sign of change, as Pampuch was the founder of the local- and seasonal-food-friendly restaurant Corner Table. The University's Food Science department has responded to this increased interest by offering the popular course "Cooking on a Student's Budget" (FScN 2002).

Of course, the U of M is home to many longstanding and new food and farm research initiatives. At the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP), we have connected local and sustainable food projects in Greater Minnesota to the resources of the U of M, including through such innovative projects as the [Mainstreet Project](#), the [Local Foods College](#), finding [markets for perennial crops like hazelnuts](#), and helping producers succeed with small-scale [Deep Winter Greenhouses](#). We have also been [instrumental](#) to early work on farm to school and related efforts, the creation and improvement of Farmers Markets, and community gardens throughout the state. To find out more, go to [RSDP.umn.edu](http://RSDP.umn.edu).